

aspirations of all the Baltic peoples.

In May, I met here in the White House with the elected leaders of Lithuania and Estonia and Latvia—and my sixth meeting, incidentally, sixth meeting with the Baltic leaders in the past 12 months. And I will tell you today what I told them: At every opportunity, I and other members of our administration have made clear to President Gorbachev and to the other Soviet leaders this nation's firm belief in the legitimate aspirations of the Baltic States. The fate of freedom in the Baltics will remain high on our agenda.

So, once more, keep up your good work. I think the educational process that all of you are engaged in as you help other Americans understand what's at stake here is very

important to the ultimate solution to these problems. And I'm delighted to have you here. And may I say, God bless the people of the Baltics. And now I want to ask the Members of Congress to come up with me as I sign the proclamation designating June 14, 1991, Baltic Freedom Day.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr.; Representatives Don Ritter and Dennis M. Hertel; and President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. The proclamation is listed in Appendix E at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing the Bill Providing Humanitarian Assistance for Iraqi Refugees and Displaced Persons

June 13, 1991

Today I have signed H.R. 2251, an Act that provides supplemental appropriations for humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons in and around Iraq and for peacekeeping activities.

I am pleased by the demonstration of bipartisan cooperation and the speed with which the Congress has worked to complete action on this legislation. This Act will enable the Departments of State and Defense and the Agency for International Development to continue their efforts on behalf of the refugees and displaced persons in and around Iraq, and to replenish those accounts which have been drawn down by the immense effort of Operation Provide Comfort. The funds provided in this Act are incremental costs of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

In the 68 days since the initiation of Operation Provide Comfort, the United States has delivered by air and land over 17,000 tons of relief supplies and provided medical

assistance for thousands of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons who fled to the Turkey/Iraq border area. Countless lives were saved. Through American leadership, spearheaded so well by the military, 650,000 Iraqi refugees and displaced persons have left the inhospitable mountains and traveled to or through relief camps we built. Most are now returning to their homes. The last mountain camp has closed. The task of responding to this human tragedy is not over, but we can be grateful for what has been accomplished by the United States, the United Nations, and the international community.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
June 13, 1991.

Note: H.R. 2251, approved June 13, was assigned Public Law No. 102-55.